

# WOOD DUCK

## Wood Duck

**Scientific Name:** *Aix sponsa*

Many naturalist believe the Wood Duck to be the most beautiful duck in North America, if not the world. The male in its multi-coloured breeding plumage, worn from October through June, is unexcelled among ducks. The female is less showy, although still beautiful and more colourful than other female ducks.

The Wood Duck is a distinctively North American species. Its only close relative is the Mandarin Duck of eastern Asia. Evidently the Wood Duck originated in North America, as fossil remains have been found only in widely scattered locations in the eastern part of the continent.

The Wood Duck is mainly a herbivore, or vegetarian, with plant foods making up about 90% of its diet. Foods vary according to their local availability, but duckweeds, cypress seeds, sedges, grasses, pondweeds, and acorns are among the more important foods throughout North America.

